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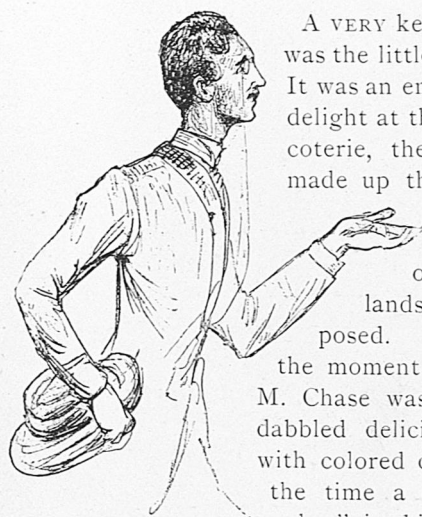
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A RENAISSANCE OF AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ART

BY CROMWELL CHILDE.

With original illustrations by J. Wells Champney.



A VERY keen enthusiasm of mine some seven or eight years ago was the little, informal, unincorporated Society of Painters in Pastel. It was an enthusiasm in a minor key, of course, but I was filled with delight at the brilliant work of this little coterie, the dashing, virile reds that made up the texture of the gowns of the supple girls Robert Blum painted, the vigorous, romantic greens of the landscapes Twachtman composed. Pastel was merely a fad of the moment with these artists (William M. Chase was among their number and dabbled deliciously, if you can dabble with colored crayons), yet they made for the time a distinct, delicate "note of color" in big, gray New York. Two

annual exhibitions bore ample witness to their skill.



GOSSIP.



A MODERN PIRATE.



VENUS AND LOVE.

The society soon died, and I wondered then why pastel was allowed to wane and to drift solely into the untaught hands of workmen in photograph galleries. Surely the traditions of pastel were noble ones. I had heard tales of its "Golden Age" on the Continent, and knew, even though faintly, of its charm. Certainly in the bits of chalk lay as great a power as existed on the palette; greater than in the water-color box. Why could not an American prophet come forward?

A later day brought the answer to my query. All this time J. Wells Champney, long a portrait-painter and a story-teller with the brush, was seriously studying this



medium, new to him, which seemed to open up a vista hardly explored. Trained in the school of engraving, then entering the field of black and white, from there establishing himself in oil and water color, he happened upon pastel purely as a matter of chance.

Some girl pupils of his (the story is worth relating) had read of the former glories of pastel in the French Court of the eighteenth century, and they came to him for information. Merely to satiate their curiosity, "Champ" (as Mr. Champney is best known to the art world) plunged into pastel lore. From the very first moment the possibilities, the daintiness of the medium fascinated him. He studied it at close range. He has made several pastel pilgrimages to Europe, and there, as the charm grows upon him, he becomes more and more engrossed in its delicate lights.

The richness of once

opened experience

years, his technical facility as a painter came at to his aid and resulted in his emphatic success as a worker in pastel. He himself chronicles two factors in his progress: discipline in his youth and four years of freedom in the art-schools of Europe. A rapid review of his working life is interesting, for it shows the foundation that has made the present possible. Born of a good old family of the East, he was

not exactly discouraged in his day dreams, but his father, a shrewd New Englander, insisted he should have a trade to fall back upon, and he chose engraving on wood. The war broke out, and "Champ" went into the field. Returning to Boston, he settled down to magazine illustration. The two great events of his next ten years were student days in Paris under the tutelage of Edouard Frère and a commission from Dr. J. G. Holland and Roswell Smith, editor and proprietors of old *Scribner's*, to accompany Edward King on a long trip through the South, Mr. King writing the letter-press for a lengthy series of articles. After that his New York career commenced.

So much is sufficient to mirror forth the kind of man Mr.



HER GREATEST PLEASURE.



IN THE BARN-YARD.

Champney is. I sat in his studio one afternoon of late, and behold! I was where on easel, on wall, and back against cabinets hung and stood replicas of that same "Golden Age" of pastel and America's modern application thereof. Nowhere else could the scene have been duplicated, or, rather, nowhere else is it duplicated. Alone among all the artists in America Mr. Champney works seriously and practically exclusively in pastel.

As a member of the Water Color



BY THE KITCHEN DOOR.



FOUR O'CLOCK TEA.

Society it is his duty to send something to each of its exhibits, and this he always does. But milady of America, herself, her children, her husband, and her parents, to portray them all faithfully in the dainty, charming medium in which La Tour painted the Pompadour, and Louis XV, that Rosalba Carriera, of Venice, painted the Astorias and M. le Duc of Tuscany, that the Swiss Liotard, the Frenchman Prudhon, the Frenchwoman Mme. Le Brun used, has become his art mission and his excelling work.



THE MAAS AT DORDRECHT.



Few other studios in New York have the interest that of Mr. Champney's offers. All is so different there. The palette is absent; in its place is a low table covered with boxes of chalk of many hues. The painter wears a long coat of pale brown holland, not unlike a sculptor's garb. The room is filled with modern portraits, with inspiring, faithful copies of famous pastels, with deftly

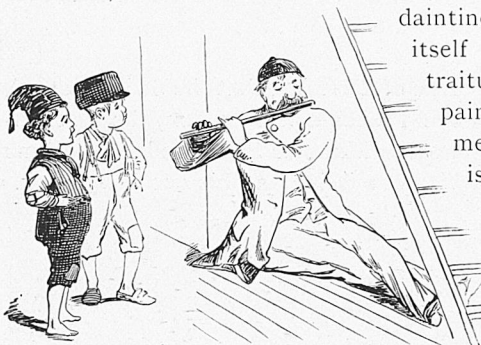
toned, delicately tinted ideal canvases.

In the "Golden Age of Pastel," before alluded to, in the possible renaissance of it in this modern time, Mr. Champney is a firm believer. He believes in pastel, because of its imperishable, unchanging qualities, if only the canvases are kept free from moisture, and because from its very simplicity and daintiness it adapts

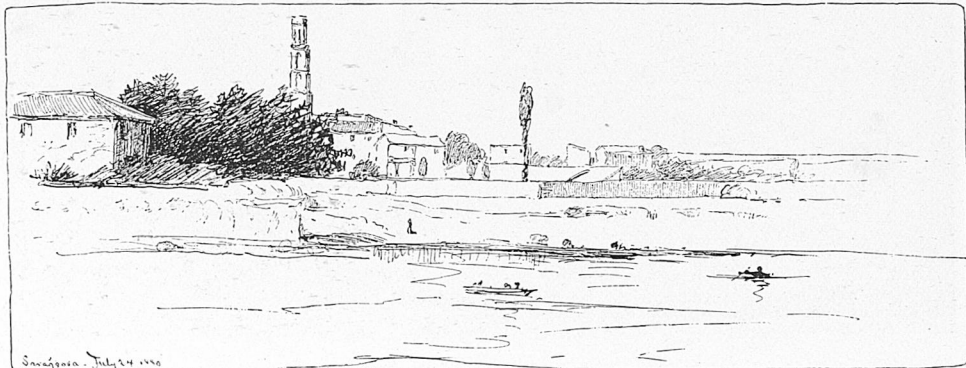
itself to the finer touches that make up portraiture. This is his dictum: "The portrait-painter is the most hampered of men. The method of pastel is a very finished one: it is expressive, complete, elaborate, a power in the way of portraiture, especially of women."

And looking at Mr. Champney's portraits, recalling his successes of the past and the present, the grace, the likeness, the flesh and blood, the life he has been able to throw into them,

one feels that pastel is all he has claimed for it and that he has the key of the magic box. It is to Mr. Champney that America will owe the reappearance of a charming art.

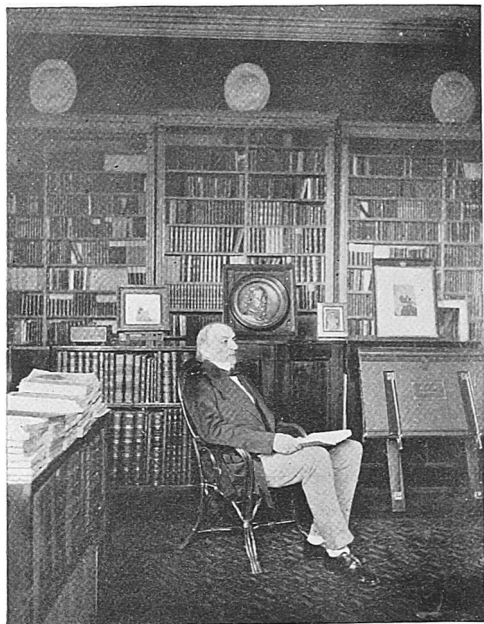


STEERAGE—"HOME, SWEET HOME!"



Saragossa. July 24. 1880

UNDER SARAGOSSA'S WALLS.



RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE,
PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT HISTORY, ROYAL ACADEMY.

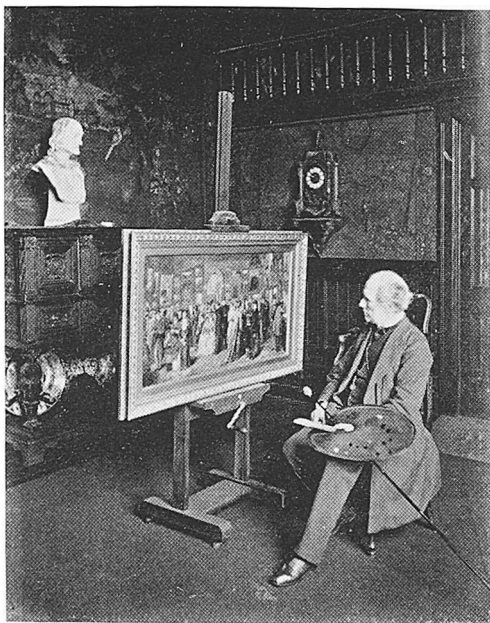


E. ARMYTAGE, R.A.



SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON, PRESIDENT ROYAL ACADEMY.

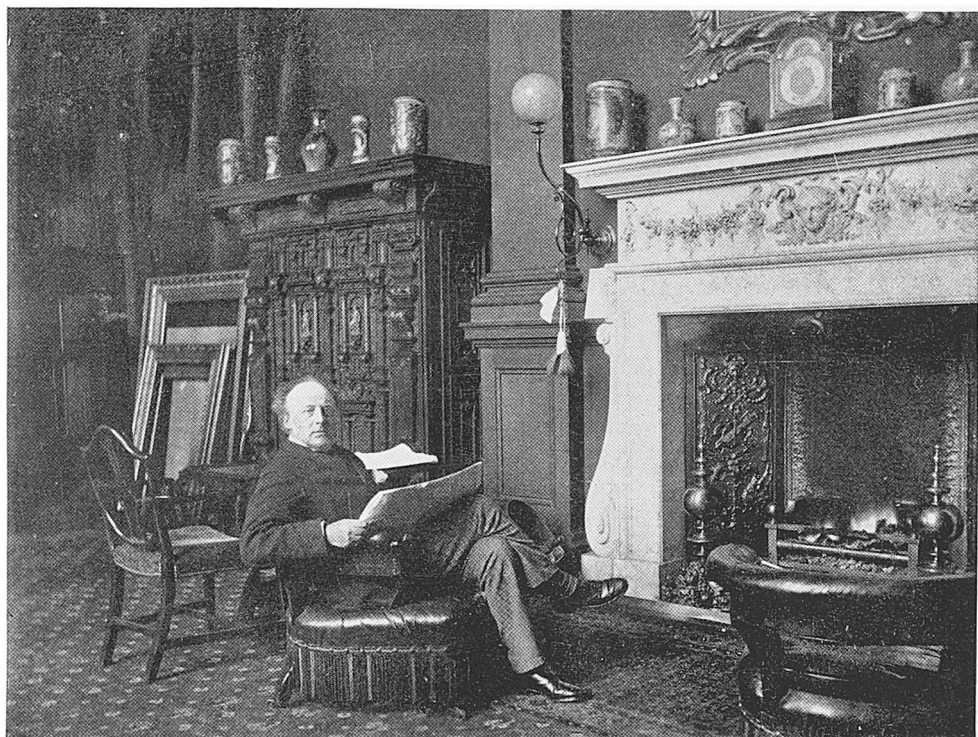
ENGLISH ROYAL ACADEMICIANS.



W. P. FRITH, R.A.



W. F. TEAMES, R.A.



SIR J. E. MILLAIS, R.A.

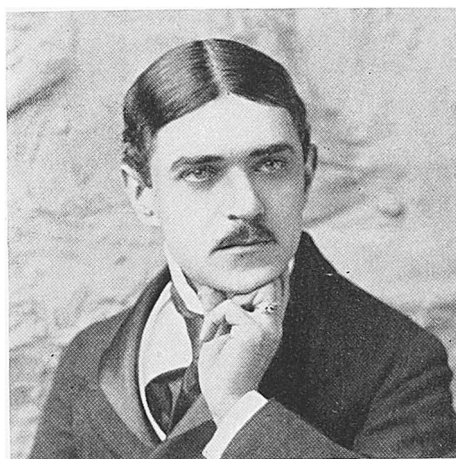
ENGLISH ROYAL ACADEMICIANS.



THOMAS W. WOOD.



GEORGE H. SMILLIE.



CARLE J. BLENNER.



ALLAN B. DOGGETT.



PERCIVAL DE LUCE.



WILLIAM A. ROGERS.



LOUIS MOELLER.



A. T. BRICHER.



EDWARD LOYAL FIELD.



OSCAR R. COAST.



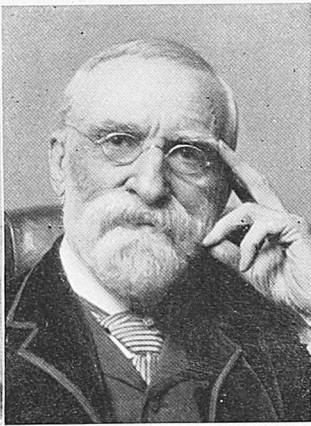
C. A. HULBERT.



JOHN A. FRASER.



CLARA RUGE.



JARED B. FLAGG.



FRED B. SCHELL.



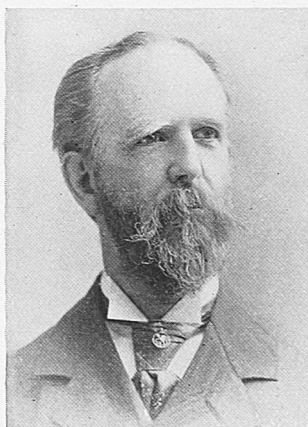
GEORGE AGNEW REID.



T. S. SULLIVANT.



T. ADDISON RICHARDS.



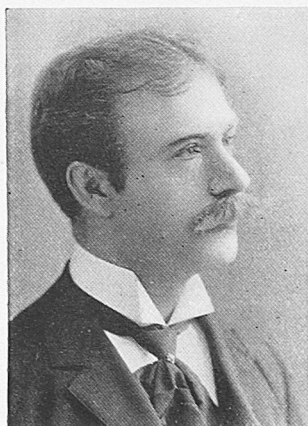
J. WELLS CHAMPNEY.



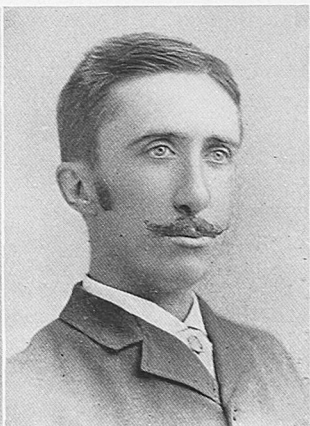
GRACE HUDSON.



J. T. BEGGS.



CHARLES MENTE.



MORGAN RHEES.



MRS. C. B. COMAN.



ADOLF SCHLABITZ.



EDUARD GRÜTZNER.



GAETANO CAPONE, JR.



HELENE GEVERS.



YEEND KING.



EDGARD FARASYN.